United Nations S/PV.7633

Security Council

Seventy-first year

Provisional

7633rd meeting
Friday, 26 February 2016, 10.10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Ramírez Carreño	(Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of))
Members:	Angola	Mr. Lucas
	China	Mr. Zhao Yong
	Egypt	Mr. Aboulatta
	France	Mr. Delattre
	Japan	Mr. Yoshikawa
	Malaysia	Mr. Ibrahim
	New Zealand	Mr. Van Bohemen
	Russian Federation	Mr. Iliichev
	Senegal	Mr. Seck
	Spain	Mr. Oyarzun Marchesi
	Ukraine	Mr. Yelchenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Rycroft
	United States of America	Mr. Pressman
	Uruguay	Mr. Rosselli

Agenda

Implementation of the note by the President of the Security Council (S/2010/507)

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16-05217 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Implementation of the note by the President of the Security Council (S/2010/507)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I shall now make a statement in my capacity as representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela would like to begin its intervention by publicly thanking all Council members and their delegations for their support during our presidency for the month of February. We would also like to publicly thank all members of the staff of the secretariat of the Security Council, in particular Mr. Movses Abelian, as well as the interpreters, technicians and other support staff for their full cooperation during our presidency.

The month of February has been one of intense work. We are ready to hand over the presidency on 29 February at midnight, as is the custom, to our brother, the representative of Angola. Over the month, we promoted our work in a constructive and transparent fashion, holding more than 21 meetings of different formats. That number includes three debates, two of which were open to all Members of the United Nations. Twenty consultations were held, and six resolutions, seven press statements and one note by the President were adopted. In addition, within the framework of consultations, we considered 14 updates under the item "Other business".

With regard to the debates held this month, we would like to begin with the debate held on 11 February (see S/PV.7620) on the working methods of the subsidiary organs of the Security Council, in particular those of the sanctions committees. That was a very valuable meeting on the dynamics of the Security Council. It allowed us, for the first time, to hear those countries that are currently or have been subject to United Nations sanctions regimes, and to the Chairs and former Chairs of subsidiary bodies of the Security Council, in particular the sanctions committees, as well as those countries that participated in the 2015 high-level review of United Nations sanctions.

The outcome of that debate was the adoption of a note (S/2016/170) by the President of the Security Council on the work of the subsidiary organs of the Security Council, which was distributed on 22 February. In that note, Council members committed to the implementation of a number of measures.

The first is to improve the transparency of the subsidiary organs of the Security Council, including by encouraging all Chairs to provide non-members of the Council with interactive briefings, as appropriate, and to consider any other possibilities for non-members to provide input to their work. It also includes encouraging all Chairs to continue to brief the Council in open meetings, including on relevant reports, as appropriate; and encouraging them, as appropriate, to provide an agreed brief summary of the relevant meetings of the subsidiary organs of the Council to non-members of the Council, including through press releases. Moreover, it includes requesting the Secretariat to announce all meetings and provisional agendas of the subsidiary organs of the Council to the public in the *Journal of the United Nations* and on the websites of the subsidiary organs, and encouraging all Chairs to seek the views of affected or concerned Member States and to foster early and periodic engagement and dialogue between them and the relevant sanctions monitoring teams, groups and panels of experts throughout the course of their mandate. It includes, furthermore, encouraging all Chairs to continue to travel periodically to regions applicable to their work to seek the views of, and engage with, affected or concerned States and explain and promote the objectives of the subsidiary organ's mandate. The Secretariat will be encouraged to maintain the translation of all United Nations sanctions lists into all of the official languages of the United Nations, and to continue to ensure that the information on the websites of the subsidiary organs of the Council is accurate and updated in all of the official languages of the United Nations, including the reports of sanctions monitoring teams, groups and panels.

The second measure is to improve the process of the selection of Chairs by, inter alia, undertaking an informal process with the participation of all Council members with regard to appointing the Chairs of the subsidiary organs in a balanced, transparent, efficient and inclusive way. The measure also includes encouraging the early appointment of Chairs of subsidiary bodies. To that end, members of the Council will start the informal process of consultations referred

to in the note (S/2012/937) by the President of the Security Council of 17 December 2012 as early as possible after each election of members of the Council.

Thirdly, improvement will also be made to preparing the Chairs of the subsidiary bodies. To that end, the note recognizes the support the Secretariat provides to the incoming Chairs and asks it to consider adopting other measures to provide incoming Chairs and their staff with additional substantive information, including on methodology, on the work of the relevant subsidiary body. Outgoing chairs would be encouraged to provide information to incoming Chairs, in writing and orally, on the work carried out during their chairmanship. The note also encourages the holding of timely consultations between the incoming Chairs and the teams, expert groups and related groups responsible for overseeing sanctions.

Fourthly, the note encourages improving the interaction and coordination among the subsidiary bodies of the Security Council and between the subsidiary bodies and the Council as a whole. That includes, among other things, that all Chairs will be encouraged, in particular those presiding over subsidiary bodies covering similar themes and geographic areas, to meet regularly to discuss common problems, improve best practices and enhance mutual cooperation, and to request the Secretariat to provide support to those meetings. Moreover, members of the Security Council will be encouraged to promote greater coordination between the Council as a whole and its subsidiary bodies when thematic issues or situations involving specific countries are considered.

Fifthly, Council members are encouraged to continue to consider how to improve the work of its subsididary bodies.

Venezuela expresses its satisfaction at having promoted that particular debate aimed at improving the work of the Council's subsidiary bodies in terms of transparency, coordination and democracy.

We would also like to mention the open debate (see S/PV.7621) on the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations as a basic element for the maintenance of international peace and security. At that meeting, held on 15 February, more than 70 representatives of Member and Observer States participaed, with our Minister for Foreign Affairs presiding. Member and Observer States expressed their opinions with regard to the observance and respect of the purposes and principles of the Charter. They stated that in order to ensure international peace and security, greater efforts needed to be exerted to promote the purposes and principles of the Charter, including respect for its provisions. The purposes and principles — including sovereignty, the equality of States, non-interference in the internal affairs of States and refraining from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity and independence of other countries — are the basic and essential elements to ensure the full application of the Charter of the United Nations. And they are essential elements for peaceably resolving conflicts, thus becoming the path to ensuring international peace and security.

In similar fashion, we were unambiguous in emphasizing that attacks on the sovereignty of States, interference in the internal affairs of States, the promotion and resort to war as a tool of foreing policy, among other actions, constituted a threat to the peaceful coexistence of nations. Many of the statements delivered underscored the importance of resort to the measures set out in Article 33 of the Charter and the need for States abstain from applying coercive measures to conflict situations that did not represent a threat to international peace and security. Also emphasized was the role of regional and subregional organizations in maintaining international peace and security. Participants also called for developing synergies between such organizations and the United Nations to that end.

The second open debate (see S/PV.7629) held during our presidency focused on post-conflict peacebuilding and the review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture. We believe that the statements and observations made during the meeting will inform the ongoing discussions at the United Nations on how to improve the response of the Organization to preventing conflicts, rebuilding States and ensuring lasting peace. Some of the main conclusions of the debate included the need to bear in mind the fact that peacekeeping activities, aimed at ensuring the outbreak, re-emergence and continuation of war, require medium- and long-term measures to help societies immersed in conflict or emerging from one.

Participants reiterated that peacebuilding required the sustained political and financial support of the United Nations over a prolonged period, even after peacekeeping operations are no longer deployed. In that regard, it is crucial to overcome social and economic problems, provide people with a way to make a living

and lay the foundation for broad-based and inclusive economic growth — the latter being a fundamental element of any peacebuilding process.

We also noted that the review of the peacebuilding architecture currently taking place in the Security Council and the General Assembly required that we looked at peacebuilding with a broader perspective and greater determination. What we need now is a new mindset, not just with regard to the architecture itself but also the entire focus of peacebuilding as carried out by the United Nations. Participants also focused on the need to make greater progress on cooperation on peacebuilding between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations.

Furthermore, with regard to the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, it is important to point out that on 7 February Council members held closed consultations on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's launch of a missile carrying a ground observation satellite. That launch entailed the use of ballistic missile technology, in violation of existing sanctions. Council members unanimously condemned that event via a press release, which underscored that the launch, as well as any other carried out by that country using ballistic missile technology, was a violation of resolutions 1718 (2006), 1874 (2009), 2087 (2013) and 2094 (2013). Council members reiterated their intention to develop significant additional measures through a draft resolution in response to the missile launch and the nuclear test conducted by North Korea on 6 January.

In addition, during our presidency of the Council we also paid particular attention to the issue of Palestine. We did so based on the demand by the majority of the international community that the Council, consistent with the its responsibilities under the Charter with regard to the maintenance of international peace and security, play a proactive role to address the question of Palestine with determination and a sense of justice. In that regard, we held three rounds of consultations under the tiem "Other matters" to discuss that issue. The lack of political will on the part of some actors to resolve the question of Palestine in the Security Council has to date prevented the reaching of a definitive solution to the more than 60-year-old conflict. We regret that the calls by the Security Council to put an end to the illegal occupation and the violations of human rights law and international law by the occupying Power against the inhabitants of the occupied Palestinian territories, as well as for the parties to go to the negotiating table, have not led to concrete actions to resolve that complex situation.

On 25 February, we considered in consultations the humanitarian situation in the occupied Palestinian territories — the West Bank and Gaza — with particular emphasis on the children who are victims of that tragic reality. That was the first time that Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and the Emergency Relief Coordinator, Mr. Stephen O'Brien, addressed that issue at the Council, during which he spoke of the lack of basic services, medicines, food and freedoms — all the result of the economic blockade, siege, policy of expanding illegal settlements and, especially, the military aggression by the occupying Power, which has led to the deaths of so many civilians in recent decades.

With regard to the conflict in Yemen, the Security Council considered the situation on two occasions, on 16 and 17 February (see S/PV.7622 and S/PV.7625). The dire reality being endured by this Arab country ever since the conflict started in March last year clearly demonstrates that conflicts cannot be settled with weapons but with a peaceful, negotiated political settlement. In that regard, we continue to call for an end to the fighting, including aerial bombings that have led to loss of civilian life and a speedy deterioration of the humanitarian situation in this brother country.

That is why we believe that it is critical to honour the agreements made during the talks held in December 2015 in Switzerland, in particular with regard to the establishment of a climate of mutual trust to defuse tensions and thereby ensure better results in talks on a peace agreement. The meeting held on 16 February on the humanitarian situation in Yemen was an opportunity for Under-Secretary-General Stephen O'Brien to deliver a briefing on the humanitarian situation in the country. Mr. O'Brien's detailed briefing was particularly useful for updating Council members on the humanitarian dimension of the conflict in Yemen, which, according to information given during the meeting, regrettably shows that the situation is far from encouraging.

In conclusion, the situation in Syria was addressed seven times by the Security Council during this month and covered the political environment, chemical weapons and the humanitarian situation. In that regard, the Council continued to closely monitor the peace talks, paying special attention to the outcome of the Munich conference on 11 February, during which major

agreements were reached on the ceasefire to start on 27 February, Damascus time. We hope that the Council will lend its strong support to the initiative. In that regard, we are awaiting the adoption of a draft resolution to be submitted to the Council for consideration in the next few hours, and will assist in finding a peaceful political solution to the armed conflict. It requires effort, dedication and determination from the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria, Mr. Staffan de Mistura, in such an important mission.

We are leaving the presidency of the Council with the belief that we have made our best effort to promote the cause of justice and international peace and security.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I shall now give the floor to the other members of the Council.

Mr. Iliichev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We are grateful to you, Sir, and the Venezuelan delegation for the skilful and effective way in which you have fulfilled presidential functions in February. This month was extremely busy because of the heavy work programme proposed by the presidency and because of events developing quickly around the world. The Security Council must still hold some key meetings. Therefore, today's wrap-up session can only be interim in nature.

We would like to point out in particular the meeting (see S/PV.7621) presided over by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Venezuela, Ms. Delcy Eloína Rodríguez Gómez. At a time when a clear understanding of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and its inviolable nature are often lacking, we consider it necessary to clearly reconfirm our common commitment to such provisions, to which there is no alternative. We cannot close our eyes to what is taking place today as a result of the flagrant interference in the internal affairs of many States, through supporting illegal regime change or the violent implanting of alien cultural or social norms. The Council is aware of such examples, and we dwelt on this subject in detail during the meeting on 15 February. Discussions on the principles of the Charter are directly related to all issues discussed within these walls and, on the basis of the Charter, we must agree on the ways in which we will implement joint risk management in the context of ever-more difficult international relations. Without respect for the founding principles, this will not be successful.

It was a particularly difficult time with regard to many issues in the Security Council this month. To a large extent, that was related to the challenging tasks we faced and the difficult political nature of the issues we have been considering. However, we would like to point out some issues in which compromise was not reached because of the unwillingness of many delegations to sacrifice their narrow national ambitions for the sake of the common good. For example, for the second time we have not been able to agree on a press statement on the Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia. Despite the fact that, generally, there is no doubt in anyone's mind regarding the importance of United Nations cooperation with regional organizations, on several occasions some delegations have refused to recognize the cooperation of the Regional Centre with organizations that are making a genuine contribution to peace and stability in the region. The Collective Security Treaty Organization and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization are clear examples of the double standards we regrettably encounter in the Security Council.

The discussion on extending sanctions in Darfur cannot be deemed productive either. The authors of the resolution abused their position and tried unceremoniously to impose their national priorities on the text, attempting to restrict entire sectors of that country's economy. By hiding behind good intentions to establish peace in Darfur and arbitrarily interpreting the recommendations of the sanctions experts, the authors have tried to put pressure on Khartoum, depriving it of its main source of income. However, they fully ignored the views of other delegations on this matter. Such a tactic undermines the unity in the Security Council. As a result, we had to have a particularly technical extension of the sanctions resolution, putting to a vote last year's text.

The document that was adopted did not include extremely important wording, including as proposed by the Russian delegation, to condemn violations of the arms embargo by illegal armed groups, the recruitment of child soldiers by rebels and attacks on peacekeepers, or an appeal for the complete, as opposed to a selective, implementation of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur. We hope that this negative experience will be taken into account when we vote on other draft resolutions in the Security Council.

At the centre of global politics and the Council's work programme in February was the situation in the Middle East, and first and foremost in Syria. It is not

surprising given the number of significant agreements that were reached this month, and we worked intensively with the Council keeping its finger on the pulse. The new trend, if it is exploited responsibly, will make it possible to hope for an early resumption of inter-Syrian negotiations under the auspices of the United Nations, as they were forced to come to an artificial pause at the beginning of the month because of the unwillingness on the part of the Syrian opposition to take part in constructive talks. We hope that the grave blunder that such groups were allowed to make by putting forward preconditions will not be repeated.

Close attention was paid to the humanitarian situation prevailing for a number of years because of the conflict and the terrorist movements that have struck that country. We firmly repeat that humanitarian issues must be considered in a comprehensive way without unnecessary politicization, which does not help the Syrians who are suffering. The situation continues to be difficult, but we did bring this month to a close with promising progress in that area, which became possible, including because of Russia's efforts. On two occasions at the Security Council, our delegation raised the issue of the continuing violations of Syrian sovereignty by Turkey, which are fraught with the risk of an escalation of that conflict. We hope that that signal will be received and understood by those to whom it is addressed and by those who sponsor them. The publication of the first report of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism to investigate the use of chemical weapons was another important moment. In our view, in the light of new facts regarding the use by terrorists of poisonous substances in Syria and Iraq and evidence of the free movement of such chemicals in the region, the importance of the mechanism will increase and the geographical scope of its mechanism will broaden.

In conclusion, we would like to wish the Venezuelan presidency a successful completion of its work this month. In a couple of hours, we will meet to discuss a draft resolution that is crucial to a settlement in Syria on the adoption of a joint statement by the co-Chairs of the International Syria Support Group on the cessation of hostilities. On Monday, we will discuss cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, as well as the work of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo.

Right now, however, I would like to take this opportunity to wish the incoming Angolan presidency every success in carrying out its important functions.

Mr. Lucas (Angola): I would first like to congratulate you, Mr. President, and the delegation of Venezuela, on the way in which you have conducted the work of the Council in February. It has been a very busy and productive month. You have already discussed the Council's activities this month in detail, Mr. President, so my statement will be short and focused.

We commend the coherence of Venezuela's programme of work through its promotion of debates on crucial issues of fundamental relevance to the Security Council's work, such as general issues related to sanctions and the working methods of the Council's subsidiary bodies; respect for the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations; and the review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture. I intend to highlight those thematic issues, considering their importance within both the general and the specific areas of work of the Council.

The debate (see S/PV.7620) on working methods and general issues related to sanctions was an important contribution to efforts to further clarify that very sensitive issue. We commend the determination and perseverance of the Venezuelan delegation in issuing its concept note (S/2016/102, annex) on the subject, to which you referred at length, Mr. President, and which included pertinent and useful provisions regarding improvements on, among other things, transparency; selecting and preparing the Chairs of the subsidiary bodies; and the interaction and coordination between those bodies and the Council itself. Considering that the Security Council makes extensive use of sanctions regimes as an important tool in its attempts to restrict, impose specific changes in behaviour or deter individuals or entities in certain States who are regarded as threats to international peace and security, the sanctions committees will continue to play a substantive role as a strong political tool for the Council. Such powers involve the ability to enforce sanctions regimes and a constant need to ensure their improvement, particularly in their decision-making processes, adoption, targeting and enforcement and also in their lifting.

Another important moment in this month's programme was the debate (see S/PV.7621) on respect for the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter, which represented an opportunity for the

entire membership of the United Nations to reiterate its attachment to them. In expressing the principled commitment of the Organization to maintaining international peace and security, developing friendly relations among nations, achieving international cooperation in solving international problems and becoming a centre for harmonizing the actions taken by countries, the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter have become pillars of international law, establishing a system of collective security that, despite setbacks, has made the United Nations the main front in the struggle over the past 70 years to achieve a more peaceful world, based on respect for international law, human rights and cooperation among all peoples and nations, with the ultimate aim of strengthening universal peace.

The founding of the United Nations and the adoption of its Charter were remarkable achievements for the international community. The Charter's principles on the sovereign equality of all States and their duty to fulfil their obligations in good faith; the peaceful settlement of disputes; non-interference in other countries' internal affairs; refraining from the use or threat of use of force; and solidarity with preventive or enforcement action directed at any State by the United Nations have become pillars of international relations and common wisdom. However, the reality is far from rosy, and we continue to witness violations of those principles that constitute a major threat to international peace and security.

The third debate (see S/PV.7629) held this month discussed the review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture currently under way. It gave Member States an opportunity to express their views on this crucial issue at a time when negotiations are being conducted on a draft resolution on the subject, its links to conflict prevention and the need for the United Nations to strengthen its capacity in the area.

The report (see S/2015/490) of the Advisory Group of Experts on the Review of the Peacebuilding Architecture points out that, on the peace agenda, peacebuilding is seen as a logical follow-up to peacekeeping and peacemaking, with the main objective of preventing relapses into conflict once peace settlements have been secured. Based on that assumption, two aspects mentioned in the report are particularly relevant — the need for a change in the mindset on the role of peacebuilding in the United Nations system, based on the concept of sustaining peace, and the vision that peacebuilding must aim to prevent the outbreak, recurrence or continuation of armed conflict, and must therefore encompass a wide range of political, development, humanitarian and human-rights programmes and mechanisms. Sustaining peace, according to the report, is a permanent task, before, during and after conflict, and requires that we adjust our approaches to peacebuilding.

With regard to the responsibilities of the United Nations system, and based on the objectives I have just outlined, peacebuilding covers the Organization's three pillars and main organs, whose activity must be better coordinated and harmonized, and more fully devoted to the prevention of armed conflict and maintenance of peace through the promotion of the values and principles enshrined in the Charter. Since, as such, peacebuilding cuts across all United Nations activities, it must be understood as an evolving concept based on the need to constantly adapt to the realities on the ground and to the time frames needed for political transitions in the wake of violent conflict.

We would like to underscore that what is at stake in the current review of the peacebuilding architecture is the entire strategy of the United Nations system for addressing conflict prevention, the root causes of conflict and the creation of sustainably peaceful societies in a context of diversity, challenges and continuing threats to international peace and security.

Finally we would like to once again congratulate Venezuela on its excellent presidency.

Mr. Rycroft (United Kingdom): I would like to begin, Mr. President, by thanking you and your team for your presidency of the Security Council for what has been a very busy month of February. I expect that the two biggest events of the month, in terms of products that we can agree on, are still ahead of us, and I hope that we will be coming back together to unanimously adopt the very important draft resolution mentioned by the representative of the Russian Federation, which welcomes the cessation of hostilities due to come into effect in Syria and points the way towards the political transition there that is so important for the people of the country and the region. Secondly, I hope we will also be able to come together before the end of the month to agree on a draft resolution on sanctions for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, which we discussed in consultations yesterday.

What I thought I might do in today's meeting is to talk about how we work rather than what we work on and, as we have done before, to use the wrap-up session to exchange views on our working methods, all of it with the aim of trying to improve the Council's overall efficiency and effectiveness. Back in November, when we held the presidency, I said there were three adjectives we wanted to have in mind — "interactive", "transparent" and "action-oriented" — and I would like to say a little bit about what we mean by each of those three, in order to see if they can help to improve the Council's overall efficiency and effectiveness.

Starting off on the topic of interactivity, I note that, first of all, that there are two different ways of doing these wrap-up sessions; either we do it formally here, which has the benefit of being a formal meeting of the Council but has the disadvantage of there being no interactivity with the people listening and watching, or we do it in another Chamber, which has the benefit of genuine interactivity. I think that I can say that people are voting with their feet. I counted, I think, 17 people in the red seats. They are all very welcome, and it is great that they are all still awake, just about, but when we did the session informally in one of the other Chambers, we had the vast majority of the 193 members of the General Assembly present, many of them at the Permanent-Representative level. I think that perhaps there is a message there for how we do these wrap-up sessions and increase the overall interactivity between the Council and the rest of the United Nations membership.

But there is also a message about interactivity in terms of how we work with each other, about getting high-quality briefers, about genuinely listening and engaging with them, and about genuinely engaging with each other on the contents of what we are discussing. There is a clear link between the level of engagement or interactivity, on the one hand, and the products that can come out, on the other.

To take a couple of examples from this month, we very much welcome the discussion that the Venezuelan presidency organized on the workings of the subsidiary bodies on 11 February (see S/PV.7620). There was a very thoughtful concept note, which informed the exchange of views (S/2016/102, annex). The United Kingdom did not agree with everything in it, but we thought that it was very well thought through, and it led to an interesting exchange of views. And following the discussion, the Venezuelan presidency worked on a presidential note (S/2016/170), which, again, we welcome very much, to capture the areas of agreement. As a result of the interactivity, the Council was able to agree on this note last week, and we now have a series of specific, concrete, practical suggestions that will, I hope, improve the transparency and outreach of the committees, encourage Chairs to share experience between incoming and outgoing Chairs and across different committees. It was a useful exchange of views; there was some interaction following it and a positive outcome.

On the other hand, we had, as others have mentioned already, an open debate about respecting the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations (see S/PV. 7621), which is an admirable topic for a debate. I naturally strongly agree with those who say that we must uphold the purposes and principles of the Charter. I would just question whether a whole series of 70 statements by 70 different countries over a whole day is actually going to change anyone's mind about such an important issue. It was clear from that debate that it is an interesting issue and that people want to talk about it, but there was absolutely zero interactivity at any point in that debate. I am therefore pretty sure, as a result, that nothing really is going to change, which is a shame because it is an important topic and it was a whole day out of the short month of February. I am not criticizing the topic of the debate. I am just saying that we need to think further about how we build some interactivity into our debates to drive up the level of engagement, which in turn will drive up the usefulness of the product or products that come out of the meetings. That is a little bit about interactivity.

On transparency, everything we do in the Chamber is of course transparent because the cameras are on us, but there are times when need to meet privately. It is very important that we be able to do so, in the Consultations Room. It is incumbent upon us to be transparent in terms of telling the rest of the membership, and indeed the public through the media, that we have had discussions, and broadly speaking what the discussions were about it, what we agreed on, what were the areas of disagreement, what are going to do next. That level of transparency each and every time we have a meeting in the Consultations Room, whether its formal consultations or any other business or anything else, I think that we should try to increase the level of transparency between us and the outside world, as a result of those discussions. If not, then particularly if

our debates in this Chamber are very stilted and formal, with no engagement, then people will rightly assume that the real action is happening elsewhere, and I think they need to know a little bit more than they currently do about what that real action looks like.

Thirdly, and finally, I would like to say a little bit about action-oriented debates, consultations and meetings. I am very keen that we do not just have a discussion for the sake of having a discussion. From the statistics that the President mentioned, it is clear that on a couple of topics we have had a very large number of discussions one way or another. Were we really making sure that each and every one of those was action-oriented so that something would actually happen as a result that was different? I am not sure that we can say that, honestly.

We have five "any other business" items. Yesterday, one of them was extremely action-oriented — the Democratic People's Republic of Korea — because the United States and China came forward with a draft resolution, which is extremely welcome. On one of the others — on the Sudan and South Sudan — we had some action in terms of an agreed press element, which the presidency was able to tell the media about, but on the others, as far as I can see, there is actually no action resulting at all, and it seems to me that might something worthy looking at if we are trying improve our overall efficiency and effectiveness.

Those are the three points I wanted to make — the Council needs to be more interactive, transparent and action-oriented. I think these concepts are all linked, in a way, and we can get a better action coming out if we are interactive and transparent. But I hope that people will accept my suggestions in the spirit in which they are intended, which is to be positive and constructive and to improve the overall effectiveness of the Council.

Finally, to wrap up, I just want to thank the President and his team again for a very full and productive month of February. I wish all the very best to the whole of the Angolan delegation and to Movses, who might have left the Chamber — maybe he has had enough already — but I thank him very much on behalf of the Security Council for his work in the role of leading the Secretariat.

Mr. Aboulatta (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to thank and congratulate the President and his team for their able leadership of the Security Council during the month of February. Our programme of work during the month was busy, with very important issues and considerations. The consensus agreements on draft resolutions regarding the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the cessation of hostilities in Syria were the crowning achievement of all our efforts. We would like to make the following observations on the different issues before the Council this month.

First of all, we would like to comment on the open debate on the working methods of the subsidiary bodies of the Security Council (see S/PV.7620). We welcome the positive results mentioned in the briefing and the publication of the note by the President contained in document S/2016/170 on 22 February. We express our gratitude to the Venezuelan delegation for its initiative in that regard. We stress the importance of this note by the President and the need to have it implemented in practical terms. This is a joint responsibility of the leadership of the subsidiary bodies, their members and their secretariats, particularly in terms of the transparency of the work of these bodies and the need for an objective vision of promoting sanctions regimes as one of the methods available to the Security Council that enhances its credibility and ability to realize the purposes and principles of the Charter.

Secondly, in the open debate in respect of the purposes and principles of the Charter (see S/PV.7621), many countries and groups of countries presented important ideas, particularly in terms of the maintenance of international peace and security. We would like to state the importance of the political will to respect the Charter and its provisions and for the United Nations to bear its responsibility to develop and improve its ability to play its role. Otherwise, it will have to withdraw from the international arena, with reliance on it gradually decreasing.

Thirdly, the open debate on the comprehensive review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture considered a number of important issues, most importantly the prevention of conflict from a political, social and development perspective. The Council thus shouldered its responsibilities in this regard through a commitment to the letter and the spirit of Chapters VI and VIII of the Charter, giving precedence to preventive diplomacy and cooperation with regional organizations with a view to the peaceful settlement of disputes. Egypt hopes that these positive ideas will be reflected in the current negotiations on a draft joint resolution of the Council and the General Assembly on the review process.

Fourthly, as concerns Syria, the crisis there was once again at the top of the Council's priorities. The developments we have witnessed recently have been marked by the positive step of having reached an understanding on the cessation of hostilities in Syria. We call on all Syrian and non-Syrian parties to remain committed to this agreement and to the continuation of the Geneva talks, as well as to beginning negotiations between the Syrian Government and the opposition, under the auspices of the United Nations.

Furthermore, while military operations have intensified, members of the Council have witnessed positive developments in terms of access to humanitarian assistance. We encourage all parties to continue to do their utmost to alleviate the suffering of the civilian population and stress once again that the Vienna process for a political settlement, which resulted in the International Support Group as well as the adoption of Security Council resolution 2254 (2015), has opened a new and historic window of opportunity for a peaceful settlement in Syria that may not reappear for years.

The Security Council bears the responsibility of guaranteeing the implementation of the plan of action and preserving the consensus of the Council as reflected in its resolution without selectivity or preconditions. Negotiations over a transitional period and access to humanitarian assistance, as well as fighting terrorism, are all parallel tracks that should be approached without delay, taking into account the importance of reaching a political settlement of the crisis as the ideal way to put an end to the suffering of the civilian population and to fight terrorism.

Fifthly, February was also busy with consultations on the question of Palestine, particularly concerning the humanitarian suffering and the continued violations of the rights of the Palestinian people. We would like to reiterate that the question of Palestine is at an extremely delicate stage, since Israeli settlement policies, the confiscation of Palestinian lands and the destruction of their homes have almost destroyed every prospect for a political settlement based on the two-State solution. We have two options: either the international community, including the Security Council, takes action to defend the rights of the Palestinian people and put forward a two-State-based solution, or we should start seriously considering how to deal with a policy of imposing the reality of a one-State solution.

Sixthly, on Burundi, February was also busy with diplomatic efforts with regard to the political crisis in Burundi, following the visit paid by the Council to Bujumbura and Addis Ababa and the visits by the Secretary-General and the Burundi configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, as well as the high-level delegation of the African Union to Burundi, expressing the concern of the international community and its interest in putting a speedy end to the conflict. However, we would warn against any attempts motivated by a specific vision of the settlement of the crisis and the means of its implementation, as well as of the role of the United Nations and its nature, without consultation with the Burundi Government and members of the peaceful opposition, as well as civil society and the other regional parties concerned.

We believe that the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Conflict Prevention, including in Burundi, should be given the proper mandate to deal with this crisis and to preserve the gains that we have achieved since the Arusha Agreement entered into force. We call on the Security Council to listen to the different views of and assessments by the various parties that have visited Burundi to arrive at a proper strategy to deal with the crisis. We reiterate our readiness to effectively contribute to our consideration of this crisis.

In conclusion, we wish you every success, Mr. President, and we also wish success to the next presidency.

Mr. Seck (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the entire Senegalese delegation, it is my pleasure to convey, through you, to the Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela our warmest congratulations on a very rich and productive presidency of the Security Council during this, the shortest month of the year, February. It was rich and productive in terms of the number of open meetings and closed consultations, the diversity of the issues debated and the results achieved.

The positive report that you, Sir, have just presented means that I shall not need to touch on a good number of questions. I shall limit myself to recalling the numerous presidential statements, elements to the press and resolutions, which are testimony to our work under your presidency.

Under the presidency of Venezuela, the Security Council has been able to focus its attention on very urgent matters such as the situations in Syria and Yemen and the Korean nuclear issue, but above all we were able

to cast light on long-standing but key conflicts such as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the tragic situation in Palestine.

Mr. President, through the skilful use of the procedures and the agenda of the Security Council, you were able to raise such important issues as the question of the sanctions regime, the role of the Council in improving the peacebuilding architecture and the methods of work of the Security Council. African issues also received attention: Somalia, the Sudan, South Sudan, Mali and the Central African Republic, as well as the situation in Guinea-Bissau, on which our Council has just unanimously adopted resolution 2267 (2016).

Mr. President, you were able, through recourse to the values and cultural wealth of your country, to organize a concert by the Venezuelan philharmonic orchestra, showing that the Security Council is made up of States and peoples with shared values.

Coming back to the statement by our friend Matthew of the United Kingdom on the issue of interactivity, transparency and results-oriented actions, I believe that the many other topics that were raised yesterday when we discussed the North Korean nuclear issue and the appointment of the prosecutor of the Residual Mechanism are examples of transparency.

Senegal welcomes the reasserted commitment of the Security Council to support the countries neighbouring Senegal, including, Guinea Bissau, in terms of reconstruction and peacebuilding.

The third lesson that I would like to underscore is that the work we have undertaken this month shows the importance of a strong and ongoing commitment by the Security Council to taking bold initiatives in many crises and encouraging positive momentum with a view to resolving them. It is under your presidency, Sir, that the Council decided to visit West Africa, which will take place next week with a visit to Mali, a neighbouring country of Senegalm to Guinea-Bissau and to Senegal to take account of things with the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Office of the Secretary-General and the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Sahel.

Once again, on behalf of the delegation of Senegal, I would like to reiterate our congratulations to you, Mr. President, and take this opportunity to pay tribute to the leadership that you, Sir, have demonstrated, and which honours your country. I would like to take this opportunity to also wish good luck to the delegation of Angola, which will take the helm in March. I assure it the full support of the Senegalese delegation.

Mr. Delattre (France) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I would like to thank and congratulate the Ambassador of Venezuela and his entire team for the significant work they have carried out this month and for a very productive presidency. With a smile, you, Mr. President, have imposed on us an intensive programme of work with a record number of items under "Other matters", including four that were discussed yesterday. We thank you, Sir.

We had a busy agenda, but I will address some issues of particular importance, among many others, without mentioning other issues, such as that of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, for example, which we discussed yesterday. I hope we will quickly be able to move to a vote on that matter on the excellent draft resolution that has been put forward.

With regard to Africa, I would like to make a few comments on Burundi and the Central African Republic. The Council's visit at the end of January and the visit of the Secretary-General to Bujumbura on 22 and 23 February helped to strengthen the international community's momentum to demand that the actors in Burundi put an end to violence and begin a true inter-Burundian dialogue without delay. We hope that the high-level visit of the Heads of State of the African Union yesterday and today will help secure concrete commitments, especially from President Nkurunziza, in that regard.

It is essential for us that the Council do everything in its power to avoid a situation in which the Burundi crisis becomes a civil war or worse. The deployment of a United Nations police contingent is a key element in that regard. We regret that an agreement still has not been reached on our draft presidential statement on that subject. We will continue to tirelessly push in that direction with a spirit of responsibility and vigilance to support the efforts of the African Union. Depending on the results of the visit of the African Union Heads of State, we will resume the initiative to support their actions.

With regard to the Central African Republic, we welcome the adoption, on 9 February of resolution 2264 (2016), which increased the number of correctional officers deployed to the United Nations

Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), will help to strengthen our fight against impunity. The holding of the presidential election is a real collective success story for people of the Central African Republic, but also for MINUSCA, Operation Sangaris and all those who supported the country's recovery. The electoral process will reach its conclusion and should allow a transition to take place on 31 March. Once the transition is complete, the Security Council must remain seized of the matter to support the Central African Republic to ensure its stability and reconciliation.

I would also like to mention the pressing issue of this day, the question of Syria. France supports a process that will lead to tangible results for the Syrian people, not a process for its own sake. We must only mention the obvious, as recalled by the Secretary-General in his letter of 17 February, that if Syrians do not see any results in their daily lives, negotiations will not be credible and they will remain an abstract — that is, absurd — piece of theatre. That is the guiding principle of our approach and that is why we have consistently condemned attacks against civilians and called for the immediate lifting of all sieges and for permanent, secure and unconditional access for humanitarian assistance to all persons in need.

We also welcomed the cessation of hostilities agreement reached by the United States and Russia, on 12 February, as a significant contribution to the resolution of the Syrian conflict. France will fully support the adoption this afternoon of the draft resolution endorsing the parameters of that cessation of hostilities agreement. However, if the role of the Security Council is to support, without hesitation, anything that can lead to a sustainable reduction in violence, it must also involve an effort to ensure that we have the collective means to fully implement such an initiative.

We must also keep in mind that, although the cessation of hostilities is welcome, it is only a first step in reducing violence. The key will be the ability to achieve, through the inter-Syrian negotiations coordinated by the Special Envoy, the implementation of resolution 2254 (2015) and the Geneva communiqué (S/2012/522, annex), as only a real transition will lay the foundation for a real end to the crisis in Syrian.

With regard to the peace process, we hope, with our initiative, to change the status quo — which is in fact a regression that increasingly weakens the two-State solution and which threatens to lead to an explosion on the ground. France is moving forward methodically with its initiative by initially bringing together the members of the International Syria Support Group and, in time, the parties in the framework of an international conference. While we do not believe that the conditions exist for positive action by the Security Council, but we remain determined to ensure that the Council can play the role it should play when the time comes.

We will act in full transparency and in close consultation with all the parties concerned. Our approach is constructive and collective so that we can find a way out of this very harmful situation. We also will seek to build on the efforts of the different partners, in particular the Quartet, whose statement of 12 February is in accordance with our efforts. The appointment of a special high-level envoy, Mr. Pierre Vimont, our former Ambassador to the United States and former Executive Secretary-General of the European External Action Service, will allow us to begin to hold extensive consultations. I will regularly inform the Council of our progress on that front.

With regard to Libya, there have also been a number of significant developments in February. Steps have been taken towards the establishment of a government of national unity. Members of the Presidential Council reached an agreement on 15 February to propose a second, narrower, consolidated list of members of the Government. France, with other partners, welcomed that announcement. While a majority of members in the House of Representatives signed a statement endorsing the Government, this is a decisive moment. The endorsement of that list and the definitive establishment of a Government of national unity are essential to address the worrying humanitarian and economic crises in the country and to confront the threat of Da'esh. We fully supported the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Martin Kobler, in his efforts. We will continue to fully support the political process so that the Government of national unity can be set up as soon as possible. The Security Council consultations that will take place on 2 March are expected to reaffirm our collective support for United Nations mediation and the ongoing process.

Lastly, the briefing of the Council planned for Monday with the participation of the German Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe presents the opportunity to

recall the central role played by the United Nations in the resolution of the crisis in Ukraine, as well as the need for the full implementation of the Minsk agreements. In that regard, France has regularly recalled that the agreements are the only possible framework for a negotiated solution.

I will conclude by again thanking the Venezuelan presidency and by wishing Angola, which takes over in a few days, the best of luck.

Mr. Yoshikawa (Japan) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I would like to thank and congratulate you, Mr. President, and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela for its efforts in the presidency this month. I would also like to thank you, Sir, for your comprehensive report on the activities of the Security Council during the month of February.

(*spoke in English*)

Of the many difficult issues that the Council has dealt with in February, I would like to concentrate on three. They include two important crises on which the Council will make important decisions today and, hopefully, tomorrow. One is the nuclear test and ballistic missile launched by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Another is Syria. The third issue that I want to touch upon is the working methods of the Council, on which the President reported at length.

First, on 6 February, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea launched a ballistic missile. After the nuclear test in January, that launch is yet another clear and flagrant violation by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea of the relevant Security Council resolutions. These are not just violations of Council resolutions, but also totally unacceptable challenges to the Charter of the United Nations. The combination of nuclear and ballistic missile development pursued by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is a real threat to the national security of Japan. It also seriously undermines the peace and stability of the region and beyond. Yesterday, a draft resolution was introduced by the United States. That draft resolution is very comprehensive and robust. I would like to express our sincere appreciation to Ambassador Power and her team for taking the lead. My appreciation also goes to China for its efforts. It is now crucial for all of us in the Council to unite in order to adopt a draft resolution as quickly as possible — tomorrow, to be more precise — in order to send a strong message to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The adoption of a new draft resolution is not an end, but a beginning. Resolutions are effective only when fully implemented. Implementation is therefore crucial to changing the policy of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea with regard to its nuclear and missile development, and to bringing it back to dialogue. I would like to take this opportunity to emphasize the importance for all of us to fully implement the obligations contained in the relevant resolutions, including the draft resolution that will be adopted very soon.

The second matter is Syria. With profound regret, I have to point out that five long years have passed since the outbreak of the crisis in Syria. According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, more than a quarter of a million Syrians have been killed, and 4.6 million fled their country during in that time. It is clear that there is no way to end the dire situation of Syrians without a comprehensive political solution. Once again, let me underscore the importance of the full implementation of resolution 2254 (2015), unanimously adopted on 18 December 2015. The Council is expected to adopt a new draft resolution today endorsing the recent joint statement of the United States and the Russian Federation on a cessation of hostilities in Syria. The implementation of that new draft resolution will be another responsibility for all of us.

Thirdly, let me mention the working methods. In my capacity as Chair of the Security Council Informal Working Group on Documentation and other Procedural Questions, I have the pleasure to announce that our first meeting will be convened on 7 March. I am delighted to inherit the significant achievements already made in this field, including the work of Angola as former Chair of the Working Group, the presidential statements issued under the Spanish presidency last October and the most recent presidential note, S/2016/170, issued under the Venezuelan presidency this month.

Japan also took the lead in comparing presidential note S/2010/507 when we last served on the Council. I would like to make a concrete contribution in that area during my chairmanship, building upon the significant achievements to which I just referred. To that end, I seek strong cooperation and support from the members of the Security Council. It is also my intention to continue to listen closely to the voices of the broader membership of the United Nations. In that context, I was very encouraged by the recent discussions held at the intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council

reform. Many delegations expressed their strong expectations that the Informal Working Group would make further progress on transparency and closer cooperation with the General Assembly. I was very encouraged to hear from Ambassador Matthew Rycroft of the United Kingdom — who is no longer here — who said that the Security Council could benefit greatly from listening to the voices coming from the General Assembly. He did not say the often-quoted phrase that the Security Council is the master of its rules of procedure.

Before concluding my statement, though I do not seem him in the Chamber, I wish to express my profound gratitude to Movses Abelian for his invaluable contribution as Director of the Security Council Affairs Division, and congratulate him on his promotion. I hope my appreciation will be conveyed to him. My only regret is that Movses will be gone when I have the honour to preside over the Council during the month of July.

Finally, I would like to reiterate my appreciation to you, Mr. President, and to the entire Venezuelan team for your tireless work. There are only three days left. I wish Ambassador Ismael Gaspar Martins — who is also not present — and the Mission of Angola every success in March.

Mr. Van Bohemen (New Zealand): I, too, want to congratulate Venezuela for a very productive and busy month. I will come back to that in a minute.

I want to talk a little about working methods and a little bit about some of the key issues that we have dealt with this month.

On working methods specifically, I want to thank Venezuela for its initiative in convening the discussion on the working methods of the subsidary bodies of the Security Council (see S/PV.7620). We found that to be one of the more interesting discussions we have had in this Chamber. I am sure — in fact, I know from the feedback I have received from other members of the General Assembly — that they also found that exercise to be very useful. What is clear from the debate and the note we have now agreed on (S/2016/170) is that there is room for improvement. We need to work smarter and focus our efforts on discharging our core responsibilities. For our part, New Zealand will continue to strive for a behavioural change in the way subsidiary bodies operate. Focusing on outcomes over adherence to formalistic process would give our work greater meaning.

There are two initiatives in particular that we will look to take forward. The first is to establish a transparent and inclusive process for the appointment of the Chairs of subsidiary bodies. The second one, which I find is particularly relevant to the work to the two Committees that I chair, is to achieve greater coordination between the subsidiary bodies and the wider Council agenda. On that point, I would note that the threat posed by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) is one of the most dangerous situations we deal with in this organ. It is very important that the Council's consideration of that issue be informed by the work of the Security Council Committee concerning ISIL and Al-Qaida.

Therefore, I would encourage everybody who takes part in our subsidiary bodies, whether they be experts or the Ambassadors who chair them — and I would encourage other Ambassadors to participate in the proceedings occasionally, especially the Permanent Members who do not have the privilege of chairing those bodies — to carry forward the spirit of the note we agreed upon in our day-to-day work. We do not need a large overhaul of the system to ensure that our work is effective, but we need to display some common sense.

Turning to the programme of work for February — which, as others have noted, has been a very busy month, one best exemplified by yesterday's marathon effort under "Any other business" — we are a strong supporter of the use of that item as a means of addressing important questions. However, I believe there comes a point when we need to pause and contemplate as how many isues we can cope with in the course of a single meeting. With regard to working methods more generally, I want to pay tribute to what Matthew Rycroft said in his statement. I agreed with all he said about the way we need to structure our work and how we can do better in working together.

As others have also said, one of the most important questions we have touched on this month was yesterday's discussion on sanctions against the Democratic People Republic of Korea. We have been waiting for a product on that for two months. It is to be acknowledged that the working methods through which that product has emerged does not square with our normal preference, but we recognize that it is an unusual situation. We want to pay tribute to the United States of America and

China for the very important work they have done. It is a very important draft resolution. It is different. It sends the important signal that we want to be sending, and so we too are among those who would like it adopted as soon as possible.

On Syria, we can be pleased — perhaps the better word is "relieved" — that some positive progress has been made at long last. The adoption of the cessation of hostilities now provides some hope that a proper peace process can be put in place and that finally peace can be achieved in that country. In the meantime, we are relieved that humanitarian access now seems to be on a sounder footing, and we would hope that the populations in the besieged towns will no longer feel that they are being held to ransom as part of the political struggle that is going on in that country.

We also want to thank the Council members for the strong support given to our suggestion that the Council consider a product on the humanitarian situation in Yemen. We think that is an issue that needs looking into next month, and we look forward to working with other Council members on that idea.

Lastly, I welcome the fact that we have been able to agree on the trip to West Africa, in particular to visit Guinea-Bissau. Over a number of months, we have been among others that have suggested that it is important that the Council show its close engagement with that country.

Let me conclude by commending, you, Rafael, and your team. Not only have you been very busy, but extremely gracious in the way you have cajoled us along the course of the difficult work we have all been engaged in. I think you have shown great dignity and professionalism, so I thank you for that. And I wish Angola all the best for next month.

Mr. Ibrahim (Malaysia): At the outset, I wish to express our utmost appreciation to Venezuela for organizing this wrap-up session. Malaysia continues to believe that such meetings provide an important platform for delegations to place on record their impressions and reflections on the Security Council's work.

I join previous speakers, Mr. President, in congratulating you and the entire Venezuelan delegation for guiding the Council through what has proved to be an extremely intense and productive month of February. Under your presidency, the Council has covered a broad range of issues and questions concerning specific situations in countries and regions, as well as thematic issues. The summing up of your presidency clearly captured how skilfully you have steered the Council to address those issues.

On that note, we appreciate Venezuela's initiative to convene a debate (see S/PV.7620) on working methods with a focus on the work of the sanctions committees. We believe that the outcome of the debate in note S/2016/170, adopted by the Council under your leadership, lays down important guidelines that will improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Council's subsidiary bodies. In addition, the open debate (see S/PV.7621) on respect for the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations was an important opportunity for the Council and the wider membership to take stock of our collective performance, in particular in the maintenance of international peace and security.

We are also pleased to have participated in the open debate (see S/PV.7629) last Tuesday on the review of the peacebuilding architecture. We continue to believe that the strength of the architecture is anchored in the Peacebuilding Commission and its advocacy and convening role, as well as in its proven capacity to act relatively quickly and flexibly. Those are important features that must be preserved and strengthened in the review's outcome.

I also appreciate your efforts, Sir, in organizing informal discussions on the issue of the selection of the Secretary-General. In that regard, I note and welcome the President of the General Assembly's proactive initiative of organizing hearings for the aspiring candidates beginning in mid-April. We are of the view that the Council should support such initiatives, and also contribute to making the process more transparent and inclusive.

The Council and the wider membership remain seized of numerous challenges and threats to international peace and security. Throughout this month, we discussed the work of a number of subsidiary bodies, namely, the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1718 (2006); the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 751 (1992) and 1907 (2009), concerning Somalia and Eritrea; the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1591 (2005), concerning the Sudan; the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 2206 (2015), concerning South

Sudan; and the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 2140 (2014).

My delegation welcomes the adoptions of resolution 2266 (2016), on Yemen sanctions. We reaffirm our full support to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Yemen, Mr. Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, and his efforts. We also urge the parties in conflict to put aside their differences in order to achieve a new ceasefire. Prolonged conflict will only exacerbate the already dire humanitarian situation. Indeed, the consequences of the security and political vacuum have been exploited by the terrorist groups.

In addition to the monthly discussions on the situation in Palestine, the Council benefited from additional discussions, specifically on international protection for the Palestinian people and on the situation of children in the occupied Palestinian territories. In that regard, my delegation welcomes and supports the initiative undertaken by France to revive the Middle East process. We believe that such an initiative, aimed at contributing to the peaceful settlement of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, is long overdue.

Later this afternoon, we will continue to respond to the situation in Syria. It is my delegation's fervent hope that this time the cessation of hostilities will be adhered to by all the parties to the conflict, and allow for some meaningful respite from the fighting. We reiterate the call on all the parties to engage constructively in the United Nations-led dialogue and consultations with a view to achieving a positive outcome, especially for the Syrian civilians, women and children who have borne the brunt of the hostilities.

The Council undertook a visit to Burundi last month, and a few days ago the Secretary-General was in the country. Since yesterday, a five-member high-level African Union delegation has been in consultations with the Government and other partners and stakeholders in the country. In the light of such sustained attention and offers of engagement and support from a wide range of international actors, we would urge all Burundian stakeholders to seize the opportunity and engage constructively with all partners with a view to creating the necessary conditions for dialogue and for the return to peace, security and stability.

Very briefly, on Guinea-Bissau, Malaysia is pleased that the mandate of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau has been extended. We fully support the mission's role and function in ensuring that the country stays the course towards national reconciliation, strengthening governance and achieving security and stability.

Before concluding, I would like to note that the Council has before it a number of important issues still to be discussed, and decisions to take, before we close the chapter for this month. In that regard, I would like to take this opportunity to stress how vital it is for the Council to be united in addressing the plight of the victims of conflict, terrorism and other challenges to international peace and security around the world. As such, we must draw deeply on our reserves of goodwill, flexibility and a spirit of constructiveness so that the Council as a whole can continue to effectively discharge its responsibility for maintaining international peace and security. We remain committed to doing our part.

Finally, I wish Ambassador Gaspar Martins of Angola and his team the very best for their presidency in March. We look forward to it.

Mr. Yelchenko (Ukraine): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, and the entire Venezuelan team, for your hard, highly professional and effective work in February. Despite the fact that today we are formally summing up our work for the month, some important and sensitive issues still require our attention in the hours and days remaining, including one that has particular importance for my country, that is, the briefing on Monday by the Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. We commend your approach, Sir, in taking into account requests from all delegations and doing your best to try to accommodate them without prejudice or discrimination.

Over the past few weeks, the Council has had to address quite a range of issues, but our performance has produced mixed feelings. I would cite as one of the highlights the debate (see S/PV.7620) on the Security Council's working methods. It was heartening to see a high level of convergence of views and an overall general understanding on the areas where the Council can make tangible improvements in the work of its subsidiary bodies. In that regard, the issuance of a presidential note on the work of the Council's subsidiary bodies (S/2016/170) is a welcome development and definitely a step in the right direction, albeit a small one. We therefore look forward to the first meeting next month of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions and stand ready to work

closely with all Council members in order to further improve our methods of work.

The open debate (see S/PV.7621) on respect for the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations in the context of the maintenance of international peace and security was very useful. The variety of views and approaches to the subject demonstrated the lasting validity of the Charter's provisions. However, the discussion made one thing clear, which is that any violation of any principles of the Charter undermines the foundation of the Organization and diminishes its legitimacy in the eyes of the world. Dangerous precedents set by unscrupulous leaders with no moral compass, preoccupied with visions of personal grandeur and blinded by imperialist ambitions, may tempt some into thinking that it may actually pay to bend the rules here and there, interpret the Charter as it suits one and lie persistently, brazenly and with a straight face. The lack of concrete action on the part of the United Nations designed to punish perpetrators, correct wrongs and restore respect for the Charter's purposes and principles makes it only too apparent to Member States that might makes right.

Is that the world that our leaders wanted to build 70 years ago? Is that the world that we would like to create now? Our answer is a resolute no. What we need is a United Nations capable of efficiently and swiftly responding to Charter violations and other challenges of today.

That brings me to the second part of my statement. The Security Council has a special responsibility to ensure that the Charter's purposes and principles are upheld and respected. Violations of the Charter quite often result in armed conflicts that kill, maim and displace huge numbers of people. When that happens, it means that the Council has failed in its main responsibility for maintaining international peace and security. For the Council to be effective, it must be united — and that is something that is missing. Nowhere has that been more pronounced and evident than in the context of the Syrian conflict. Despite numerous discussions of the Syrian issue in the Council, in practice very little has been done to alleviate the Syrian people's suffering, put an end to the bloody conflict and focus energy and resources on combating the threat posed by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham, which is metastasizing into other countries in the region. A glimmer of hope for the Syrian people has recently appeared. We sincerely hope that the Council will not waste that precious window of opportunity.

I would be remiss not to mention the issue of the sanctions against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. After the January nuclear test, we expressed our strong condemnation of the Pyongyang actions threatening international peace and security. After the February missile launch, we reiterated our position that the Council must react robustly to such flagrant violations of numerous Security Council resolutions. While it is somewhat regrettable that it took so long for a draft resolution to arrive on the Council's table, we are nonetheless satisfied with its comprehensive nature and would like to express our appreciation for the efforts of the United States and China, which drafted the text. We consider the draft resolution's upcoming adoption to be a significant step on the part of the international community in helping to strengthen the global non-proliferation regime. We are realists, and we do not expect Pyongyang's behaviour to change overnight. But our long-term hope is that the Korean peninsula will eventually be transformed from one of the world's hotspots into a region of peace and stability.

Although today we are discussing what has been done in the past month, I suggest that we take a look further ahead to an issue of great interest and importance to the general United Nations membership — the appointment of the next Secretary-General. In February there were some useful exchanges among Council members on the selection process. With seven candidates officially nominated so far and new ones likely to emerge, I believe it is very important to ensure that the Council start holding some preliminary discussions on the issue right away, without postponing it until July. In our opinion, it would be beneficial if the Council were to convene at least once a month on the subject in consultations format, under the "Any other business" item, maybe towards the end of each month.

In conclusion, Mr. President, I would like to wish you a successful completion of your duties in the next few days and to assure the incoming Angolan presidency of our full support.

Mr. Zhao Yong (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China would like to thank you for convening today's meeting, Mr. President. The Council has been very busy this month, and China greatly appreciates the fact that Venezuela has presided over our work efficiently and

smoothly. I would like to focus on three issues relating to the Council's work this month.

First, on the Middle East, the Israeli-Palestinian peace talks are currently at an impasse, the security situation there is worsening and the humanitarian situation in the occupied Palestinian territory is serious. China is deeply concerned about that. Preserving the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people is the collective responsibility of the international community, which should take stronger measures to reactivate the Israeli-Palestinian peace talks, push Palestine and Israel to resume them as soon as possible and meanwhile strengthen cooperation with Palestine and economic assistance to it with a view to alleviating the humanitarian situation. The Council should respond positively to Palestine and the Arab States' legitimate aspirations and carefully study the issue of providing international protection to Palestine, in order to play a greater role in promoting the peace talks. China welcomes all initiatives conducive to ameliorating the situation and resuming peace negotiations.

Secondly, with regard to Syria, there has been good progress recently in bringing in humanitarian assistance and promoting a cessation of hostilities. Important decisions were made at the ministerial meeting in Munich of the International Syria Support Group regarding expanding humanitarian aid and halting hostilities. The Russian Federation and the United States reached an agreement on ceasing hostilities, which China welcomes. We call on the international community and the countries of the region to continue to support the mediation efforts of Special Envoy De Mistura and to act together to push all the parties in Syria to accept and implement the agreement as soon as possible, with the aim of ceasing hostilities and resuming the Geneva peace talks in order to create conditions conducive to a rapid and appropriate settlement of the Syrian issue.

Thirdly, on South Sudan, good progress has recently been made in implementing the agreement on resolving the conflict in South Sudan. The Government of South Sudan has declared that it is going to establish a Government of national unity in the first week of March. China highly appreciates the mediation efforts of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD).

South Sudan has just started its peaceful reconstruction, and there is a long and difficult journey ahead. It therefore needs strong support from the international community. China hopes that the Council and the international community at large will continue to provide support to IGAD. Meanwhile, we actively encourage all the parties in South Sudan to meet each other half way and push for an early formation of a transitional Government so as to restore peace, stability and development in the country at an early date. China will continue to play a constructive role in the political settlement of the question of South Sudan.

Last but not least, I wish the delegation of Angola, the incoming President of the Security Council, all the best in the month of March.

Mr. Pressman (United States of America): The Security Council deals with diverse challenges, many of which we struggle to find agreement and consensus on. On one, however, the will of the Council, and indeed of the membership of the Organization, could not be clearer: North Korea. Over the past weeks, North Korea's dangerous actions and defiance of the Council's previous resolutions merit an unyielding response from the body mandated by the Charter of the United Nations to maintain international peace and security.

Let us be clear. North Korea's nuclear tests and missile launches are often described as "provocations". However, that euphemism does not do justice to what the North Korean regime is doing. It is not merely "provoking", it is not merely acting in defiance of the demands of the Security Council, and indeed the world. No, North Korea, with each test, with each launch, is steadily and practically advancing its operational capacity to develop and deploy nuclear weapons. With each test, with each so-called provocation, North Korea is building its ability to endanger every nation of the world. And with each act of defiance, our collective resolve to stop it must become even stronger.

We cannot tolerate actions from a regime that on a grotesque, widespread and systematic basis flouts international law by abusing its own people and, with similar precision and disregard, defies the will of the Council by developing the most dangerous weapons known to humankind. That is why yesterday, after extensive and productive collaboration and consultation with partners, the United States submitted a draft Security Council resolution in response to North Korea's recent nuclear test and ballistic missile launch. If adopted, the draft resolution would represent the strongest set of sanctions imposed by the Security Council in a generation. Those sanctions would send an

unambiguous message to the regime of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea: "the world will not accept your proliferation, there will be consequences for your actions, and we will work relentlessly to stop your nuclear programme".

The sanctions are not punitive; they are practical and will help our collective efforts to impede the Democratic People's Republic of Korea programme by making it harder for the country to raise the funds, import the technology and acquire the know-how to advance its illicit nuclear and ballistic missile programmes. As long as North Korea continues to undermine international security through its dangerous pursuit of nuclear weapons, we must work together to impede its ability to endanger our shared security and to hold it accountable.

In Syria, efforts have intensified to ensure unfettered humanitarian access while putting in place a cessation of hostilities leading to the resumption of political talks. The International Syria Support Group and the parties in Syria are working together towards a cessation of hostilities, set to go into effect at midnight tonight in Damascus, thereby offering a possibility to halt the horrific violence and relieve the suffering of the Syrian people. We expect the implementation of the cessation of hostilities to end the aerial bombardments and the regime ground offensives, which have cost so many lives and displaced more than 70,000 around Aleppo in recent days.

Meanwhile, recent progress on humanitarian access to a handful of besieged areas is welcome, but is only the beginning. While we commend the work of the International Syria Support Group's humanitarian task force, this is only the first step towards full, sustained and unimpeded access throughout the country. We will not be satisfied with one-off deliveries to a handful of areas that should have had unimpeded assistance all along, and which has been completely denied and, in some cases, denied for years.

Over the last week and a half, convoys have provided aid to less than 100,000 people — less than one fourth of those living in serious besieged areas. Millions still urgently require aid. The Syrian regime, and all parties, needs to lift any and all obstacles to assistance. Ultimately, the only way to end Syria's conflict is through a political process leading to a political transition in accordance with the Geneva communiqué (S/2012/522, annex).

The crisis in South Sudan continues. Leadership from the opposing parties is desperately needed. We heard a comprehensive set of briefings on South Sudan last Friday, and yesterday's briefing by the Chairperson of the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission (JMEC), Festus Mogae, was particularly important. The JMEC is essential to progress in South Sudan, and we hope to continue to hear regular updates from the JMEC Chairperson in order to appropriately support his work in overseeing the implementation of the peace agreement.

We continue to be alarmed by the human rights abuses in South Sudan, and the briefing by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) described a scorched-earth strategy, a strategy that manifests itself in civilians being intentionally burned alive in their homes. As the United Nations detailed in a recent report on Unity state, we are now seeing coping strategies among the most severely food-insecure households that include food-security experts observing things being consumed in South Sudan that they have never seen before, such as the consumption of reconstituted dried goatskins, meaning eating goatskin off of furniture, or eating inner sections of palm tree trunks, meaning eating wood.

Given the seemingly unending and horrific nature of the abuses unfolding in South Sudan, we must all remain committed to supporting accountability for the perpetrators, including through the mechanisms outlined in the peace agreement, namely, the establishment of a credible hybrid tribunal. The people of South Sudan deserve security and peace, and they also deserve justice.

In Burundi, while we welcome recent announcements and reports of prisoner releases, announcements must be followed by action. Credible dialogue outside of Burundi with the opposition must restart now. Unfortunately, the Government continues to crackdown on civil society and political opposition. And, also unfortunately, widespread human rights violations are a daily occurrence. Necessarily, the Council must continue to examine all options to ensure that a credible political process proceeds and that civilians are safe.

Last week, six activists in the Democratic Republic of the Congo were arrested after calling on President Kabila to step down. On Wednesday, they were sentenced to two years in prison for incitement.

Intimidation must stop, and the Security Council, in the months ahead, must remain focused on ensuring timely and credible elections.

Finally, we were pleased that the Council discussed Burma's political and human rights situation in consultations yesterday afternoon. We particularly welcomed OHCHR's perspective and will continue to encourage further high-level Council interaction with that Office in future meetings.

A peaceful post-election period is crucial for stability and maintaining the confidence of the people of Burma in this transition. However, there remain obvious and important impediments to the realization of a fully democratic and civilian Government. Although we have seen a number of key important steps in the right direction, we remain concerned about significant human rights problems on a variety of fronts, including, but not limited to, the treatment of the Rohingya. The situation in Rakhine state remains grim, and the Government needs to take significant, sustained and strategic steps to address the hatred and bigotry and resolve the crisis.

In conclusion, I would like to thank you, Mr. President, and your delegation, for your leadership during this past month. Our work this month is not yet over.

Mr. Rosselli (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, I would like to express our delegation's gratitude to you and your entire delegation, Mr. President, for the excellent work you have done. I would say that yours has been an active and activist presidency. It was active in that we worked at a laudable pace, and it was also activist in that it brought to the Security Council and the membership issues that, although of interest to all of us, were of particular importance for Venezuela to highlight.

Venezuela as President rightly pushed us to work on these issues in the same manner as other members of the Security Council who have the same rights, using the mechanism "Other matters" to bring together all of the points that are of concern to us because they were considered relevant to deal with at this stage.

I am not going to touch on the various issues that we covered, since you, Mr. President, in your exhaustive summary, covered almost all of them, and my colleagues have also made reference to the entire list of subjects. What I would like to do is reflect on things given the 57 days that my delegation has been here in the Security Council, and highlight some themes merely because I am new in the Security Council, and they stand out for me. But I would like to stress that we have had a busy agenda, heavy with horrors: the humanitarian situations in the Middle East and the Horn of Africa, which are truly depressing. But here it is important to highlight and pay tribute to the role being played by humanitarian bodies both in the United Nations system and in the many non-governmental organizations that are on the ground risking their lives. Unfortunately we have seen reports about dozens of humanitarian workers who have lost their lives in all of these conflicts.

At the same time, I wish to highlight the sacrifice being made by the troops and the forces deployed in the many peacekeeping operations, who have also lost many lives carrying out the tasks that have been given them by the Security Council. So this leads me to say that on the ground we have a large number of people who are not just carrying the flag but also paying for it with their very lives.

I should also like to highlight the role being played in many forums by the Special Representatives of the Secretary-General. In many of the situations where they are playing a role — I do not want to list any names so as not to forget anyone, that would be unfair — we see their perseverance, determination, efforts, dedication and impartiality and objectivity. We deem that there has been a positive balance in that which we have seen over the 57 days that we have been in the Council.

I would also perhaps analyse how we have worked over these 57 days. I am concerned that we have had more than 75 meetings in 57 days; that is more than one meeting per calendar day, so we have had many meetings. But when I look at the outcome, there have been very few results indeed. So far we have had six resolutions, including five that are basically procedural, "rollovers" as they say in English. One was that on Colombia; it is really outside the scope of the Security Council. Yes, excellent work was undertaken by the Colombians themselves; they were well supported by Cuba, Norway, Chile and Venezuela, but the origin of the resolution was the result of work done outside the Security Council. The Council did a good thing in approving the resolution.

Other outcomes were numerous press statements. I counted 21, eight of which are statements condemning

terrorist attacks, so they had to be issued, because we are all against terrorism and repudiate it. So they are almost a knee-jerk reaction. Then we had 13 press statements of some substance. The problem is that in one way or another we are responding to horrendous situations on the ground with press statements.

On the other hand, there have been good developments. I think it was Gerald who said that said that we are maybe not pleased but relieved, with respect to Syria, for instance. I would say that the progress we have seen in Syria also is external to the Council Chamber, if not to members of the Council. If they have played an important role, then we welcome them and support them. The Security Council should support all those activities and developments that could lead to pacifying the situation and preparing the ground for forward movement.

The negotiation process has taken place outside of the Security Council. Perhaps that is the best it could have been. But for me, as a new arrival in the Security Council, I would point out as something of interest that issues of this scale are dealt with more profitably outside the Security Council rather than inside it.

Let me come back to something that we pointed out our wrap-up; we make a distinction between meetings and consultations. There is a difference between plenary meetings and consultations. It makes me think of the title of a poem by a Uruguyan poet, Mario Benedetti, "Let us demystify the Milky Way". It is a very lovely poem; I will not recite it here. But the idea of demystification is so important; let us try to demystify consultations. Frankly, in consultations, no member of the Security Council, as far as I can see, has said anything that could not have been said here in this very Chamber, in front of the entire membership. We could have done it here, but no. We go into that little room over there, and we agree on certain things in a narrower context, but having listened to things over there in that little room. But the truth is that there was nothing said there that could not have been said here. I think this is the culture of the Security Council.

Speaking of the Council, I wish to pay tribute in the following respect. The presidency is not the person responsible for achieving all the outcomes, such as for Syria and Yemen. It does not depend on the presidency. But the Venezuelan presidency raised the issue of the working methods of subsidiary bodies, particularly the sanctions committees. It had an idea, made a proposal and issued a presidential note — useful to the Security Council, well elaborated by the presidency and a concrete achievement by Venezuela that made a contribution to our body of work.

Therefore, in line with what I have just said, I would like once again to thank you, Rafael, and your entire delegation. Next Tuesday we will welcome our colleagues from Angola, to whom we wish the best of luck.

Mr. Oyarzun Marchesi (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank you, Rafael, and your team for your outstanding presidency. It is quite clear to me that we would be nothing without our teams. I would also like to wish every success to the presidency of Angola.

I shall concentrate on two aspects. As Elbio Rosselli always says, it is difficult for the last speaker to say something new. But I will try to do so.

First, I would like to refer to a practice that we have seen this month, which is that of discussing matters under the item "Any other business". My team has been working intensively and, according to our calculations, you, Sir, convened 12 such meetings — although, you, Sir, say the number is 14. This practice seems to me to be necessary and advisable because, in fact, that is the work of the Security Council. The Council cannot limit itself to meeting only when the schedules are set in accordance with the reporting system. We have to meet when there is a situation that demands the attention of the Security Council. However, despite all the fondness and trust that I have for you, Mr. President, 14 meetings seem perhaps a bit too many. You, Mr. President, have the great distinction of having created a new trend or doctrine. However, in the light of the upcoming presidencies — those of Angola, China and Egypt — I would like to say to all members that we need to find a balance between quality and quantity. The item "Any other business" is good, but we need to reserve it for true emergency situations. If we look to the past, we see that previously this item was used in very exceptional cases, but this month it has become frequent. That is fine. You, Sir, have created a new school of thought, but I call for prudence.

Secondly, Spain is a great defender of transparency, which means that what we do in the Security Council can be shared to some extent with the General Assembly. I am very proud that during our presidency our team decided to end the month with a wrap-up session — later known as a Toledo style wrap-up — that allowed for

interaction between members of the Security Council and members of the General Assembly.

I am a bit disappointed today at seeing the small number of people who are listening to us. Why does that trouble me? Because they cannot talk to us. We are in this magnificent Chamber talking about what we do in the Security Council, while they have to limit themselves to simply listening and cannot ask any questions. My request, and that of Spain's, is that, if it is agreeable to them, the three upcoming presidencies I mentioned, as well as other subsequent ones, agree that the wrap-up session be held in the the Toledo format —that is, to allow members of the General Assembly to ask us questions. I will not go into any more details on that point.

What I found very interesting in Ambassador Rosselli's intervention was his mention of the proliferation of meetings and, at the same time, the lack of resolutions. I would add something else, which is what most concerns me. It is true that we meet a lot and produce little. However, I would change the words a bit. I believe we talk too much and do not implement enough: there is too much talk in Security Council meetings. And while some resolutions are indeed adopted, where we really fall short is on implementing resolutions and presidential statements.

The second issue I want to mention is humanitarian affairs. I believe that this is one of the greatest hallmarks of the Venezuelan presidency, which I applaud. There have been countless meetings on humanitarian issues — on Syria, Yemen, South Sudan and other places. At the end of the day, however, we are talking about people in need. When we focus on humanitarian concerns, Council meetings allow us to do three things: first, to establish early-warning mechanisms; secondly, to facilitate humanitarian access; and, thirdly, and most important, to promote respect for humanitarian law.

To conclude, let me touch on two very timely issues related to threats to international peace and security.

First, with regard to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, I would like to fully align myself with the statement delivered by the Ambassador of Japan. I believe that it is absolutely essential that the Security Council adopt a draft resolution that marks a qualitative leap forward in terms of sanctions against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Why? First, because previous resolutions have proved to be insufficient; secondly — and I trust there will be support from the 15 members of the Council for this — because there is a need to send a signal of unity and a single message; and, thirdly, because I think it is urgent to do so, for we cannot allow there to be any delay on the part of the members of the Council in the face of threats to international peace and security.

With regard to Syria, I will be very brief: I trust that we will adopt a draft resolution this afternoon. I will therefore save my statement for the meeting that will start some time after 3 p.m.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I should once again like to make a statement in my national capacity.

It seems to me that this has been a very interesting meeting. I should first like to clarify that we have sent out an invitation to an open Toledo format wrap-up session, to be held on Monday at 4 p.m., in line with the commitment we made at the first such meeting, held under Spain's presidency. And we have continued to insist on that ever since. As members know better than I do — given that they have had much more time on the Council, especially the permanent members, such as the United Kingdom — this meeting is being held in order for an official record to be prepared. Everything we are saying here is recorded, and I can hear the reporters preparing the records. There is thereby accountability for the Council.

Whether or not the Security Council is losing some of its prestige or legitimacy at the United Nations — those are not matters that will be resolved in a month. There are some issues, however, such as the lack of resolutions adopted in the Security Council, that make the General Assembly view the Council as an entity that already taken its decisions in advance. Regardless, the first thing I wanted to mention here is, as I have just said, the meeting to be held at 4 p.m. next Monday. We have tried to honour all the requests that have been made for the agenda of that meeting. The German Foreign Minister will be with us on Monday morning, while at the afternoon meeting on Kosovo we will have with us the Foreign Minister of Serbia and the representative of Kosovo. But we will indeed end Monday with a meeting in which we hope that all the members of the General Assembly can voice their opinions on the subject of today's meeting. I am inviting a number of Ambassadors to join us so that we can address these matters.

On another matter, when we saw the Council's original programme of work — established in

accordance with the periodic reports we consider — we found it somewhat sad given all the problems in the world. While the Secretariat does in fact do excellent work in supporting the Council, there are nevertheless other issues that are both timely and pending. The only way to take up those issues has been under the item "Any other business". We do not expect that a resolution will be the outcome of every discussion under that agenda item. As is well known, however, especially by the permanent members, the Security Council often serves as a sounding board and provides for a process to later build consensus around a particular issue, such as we have seen in the case of Syria. I do not know how many resolutions have been adopted and meetings have been held on Syria. We now hope that at last today we can sign a ceasefire, which is just the beginning of a process. The same goes for the issue of Ukraine over the past year — we have already been on the Council for a year. I am talking about recurring issues that elicit a great deal of interest. When the issue of the nuclear tests arose, we met on a Sunday. That is how it ought to be, and I thank Elbio for what he said — as South Americans, we understand each other well.

We cannot allow talking about Western Sahara to be forbidden, for example. Nobody talks about Western Sahara, and there is no way to talk about the last colony in Africa in a public format. There is no way because they block it. It is possible that at some point conflict may once again erupt — the Polisario Front may break the ceasefire or there may be a return to war — and then we will see it as an emergency situation.

It is the same for the issue of Palestine. We really do not expect anything, because the Security Council is unable even to produce elements to the press with regard to issue of Palestine. However, children continue to die. The situation grows ever-more complicated, and at some point we will find ourselves with a conflict in Palestine. Then we will hold emergency meetings. We will have humanitarian meetings.

In this way the Security Council is more reactive than preventive. Therefore, the use of "Any other business" seems to us the only way we can talk about issues that we think should not continue to go ignored. That is why we took this decision in our presidency. By the way, I should clarify — Davey, Ambassador Pressman, mentioned that our work this month was not yet over, and he is concerned about our meeting tomorrow — that we will meet tomorrow, as we will on Monday, until we address all the issues before us. Hopefully, we will be able to decide on all the pending draft resolutions — on North Korea and Syria — and take care of everything we have to do. This meeting is not the end, but this time slot was the only available for the wrap-up session.

As I was saying, it is difficult to measure the effectiveness of a body by the number of resolutions adopted. It is a political discussion. This is a political discussion, and the purpose is to create awareness and to reach consensus. However, in the end each country must consult with its capital and see what to do. But the Security Council is just that: a sounding board for issues.

Returning to the point made by Matthew, Ambassador Rycroft — and I regret that he has left; he must be working on one of the draft resolutions — with regard to transparency and the issue of interaction, it seems to us very important that more than 70 countries took the floor in the open debate (see S/PV.7621) on respect for the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations as a key element for the maintenance of international peace and security. Had no delegation attended, then we would have reason to be worried; for it would have meant that the purposes and principles no longer held any importance for Member States. Again, I do not expect the members of the General Assembly to change their view of the Security Council, but I think that meeting offered a way for the Assembly to say to the Council that the subject was important, as in some situations the purposes and principles are being, or are on the verge of being, violated.

The other issue I wanted to highlight — and I appreciate all the comments in this respect — is that this month we were able for the first time here to hear from countries subject to sanctions. That goes to the issue of transparency. There is nothing worse, or as opaque, as a sanctions committee. It is horrible. No one knows what goes on. And far less transparent are the decisions taken in the committees. Obviously, this is a political organ. There are no technical experts here, and no one sitting here is a technical expert in anything. We all work in the political realm and hold political positions, and we must be prepared to debate. In our country we are used to democratic debate: there is no veto; there is an open, democratic debate, and the majority decides. That is what we would like to introduce.

I thank everyone present for their comments and for their expressions of friendship and sympathy with

our country. We have tried to provide a small example of the nature of Venezuela. We will continue to do so and to build closer relationships with all the countries of the international community, all the while showing who we are: a people of peace with a clear position and very clear principles, and always trying to strengthen and help the rest of the international community.

The representative of Spain has asked for the floor to make a further statement.

Mr. Oyarzun Marchesi (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): I simply wanted to wrap-up Toledo style by noting what you have just said, Mr. President, for which I commend you.

The meeting rose at 12.25 p.m.